

that we see in our country if we have effective preschool, prekindergarten programs. Head Start is just that kind of a program.

We see over and over again the evidence showing us it has a positive economic and social impact across this Nation, particularly in its comprehensive nature, the fact that it deals with education, deals with health issues and social implications.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, my State, 80 percent of 3-year-olds are still not enrolled in prekindergarten or Head Start programs. We need to be expanding this program for all of the good things it does because we need to take advantage of that opportunity to close that gap.

One of the ways that we are going to do that is to attract quality teachers. I am glad to see in this bill that Mr. SESTAK has filed an amendment to provide up to \$10,000 in loan forgiveness for college graduates who commit to teach in the Head Start field. We have raised the standard of the teachers that we want, requiring them to meet a certain grade. That means we are going to have to pay people in order to go into this profession because it is still going to cost them considerably to get that degree. If we are going to do that, we have to step forward. I think Mr. SESTAK's idea, which we have been talking about in the higher education reauthorization bill for some time, is one way of doing that. Loan forgiveness for early education teachers over a period of years will allow us to have that program meet the pinnacle that we need it to reach.

For this and many other reasons, I think this bill is a good bill and deserves our attention and our support. I ask my colleagues to join me in voting for it.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Delaware for allowing me to come and chat on a little different topic, a topic that we tried to bring to the floor today on this bill, and a topic that I think would truly expand and protect children in the Head Start program, but a topic that wasn't allowed to be brought to the floor because an amendment wasn't allowed. I think this issue truly demonstrates where the priorities of the majority party are.

This issue that I attempted to bring to the floor would have resulted in significantly greater safety for the children who are transported in Head Start programs.

In 1992, Mr. Chairman, Congress required the issuance of regulations that related to rear-door emergency exits and safety restraints on Head Start transportation. That was in 1992. Since the final rule for these new regulations was published, the effective date has been delayed three times.

Last week, buried deep in H.R. 1591, the emergency supplemental for Iraq,

was language that delays these transportation safety requirements for Head Start programs once again. The fine print reveals that the rear emergency exit requirements are delayed for another year, and a seat belt safety requirement is delayed until another study is done.

Well, Congress required these regulations to ensure the safe operation of vehicles by Head Start agencies; and currently, the leading cause of death for children ages 3 to 7 is motor vehicle, traffic crashes. The reason why these transportation requirements were put forth is that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration does not approve of the use of vans or cars or vehicles of other types for the purpose of providing planned transportation services. School buses are the safest form of transportation because they include many special features. Further delaying these requirements means authorizing that Head Start grantees can transport children using vehicles that are not designed specifically for the purpose of the safe transportation of children.

My amendment, which wasn't allowed, would have ended this delay and make the regulations for emergency rear-door exits and seat belts on vehicles used to transport children effective immediately.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, on the first day of this Congress, children were paraded in front of the American people, and the new majority claimed that the House would come to order for the children. Well, today, if it is truly about the children, then the majority would have allowed this amendment to be entertained. Any further delays endangers lives of children.

So I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the hypocrisy of this process is telling, and that if we truly are interested in making certain that our greatest resource, our children, the future of our Nation, are protected, then we would have allowed this amendment, and I am distressed it wasn't allowed. I encourage through the process the majority party make certain that we address this as this bill moves forward.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1429, the Improving Head Start Act. I represent the majority of Suffolk County where 20 Head Start and three Early Head Start centers have been serving the community since 1966. In fact, my wife's first job out of college was as a Head Start teacher in one of those centers.

Parents, teachers and many of our colleagues can all agree that Head Start is one of our Nation's most prominent and successful early education programs. This bill continues to build on Head Start's successes by en-

suring that kids are prepared for school, by improving teacher and classroom quality, strengthening the focus on school readiness, increasing accountability and boosting coordination.

Research finds that children who attend Head Start enter school better prepared than low-income children who do not attend the program, and that children who attend Head Start make significant gains.

If we are serious about achieving the goals set forth by No Child Left Behind, then passing Head Start reauthorization is a down payment on achieving those goals.

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During the markup of this bill, I was proud to offer an amendment that would allow Head Start programs to use up to 10 percent of their quality improvement funds for transportation costs. This amendment was in response to concerns brought to me by my constituents that many have thought programs were being forced to choose between providing transportation to children or sacrificing the quality of their program.

With my amendment and so many other worthwhile improvements to Head Start, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this balanced reauthorization for the benefit of our children and future generations of America.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, we have no further speakers, and we reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman of the full committee for his leadership and all the members of the committee and Mr. KILDEE for his leadership as well on some of these very important issues. We have worked together. I thank the ranking member for their long-standing understanding that we must collaborate when it comes to teaching our children.

I rise to support H.R. 1429 and had the pleasure of visiting a Head Start facility in my community. What was the greatest joy was to be able to see the parents and children working together on this very special day, and I want to thank the committee for persevering against all odds, particularly the opposition of those who would say it is time to change drastically, to do a surgical reform on Head Start.

It has worked for some 30-plus years, and what has been done in this legislation is the right direction: enhanced professional development, providing more degreed teachers teaching, providing opportunity for the associate degrees, working with caretakers or assistants in the classroom, and really